IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A structured document search method for searching a structured document database, comprising:

accepting a search request in the form of a logical structured document;

analyzing the accepted search request for generating a search graph;

generating a search plan <u>for a hierarchical structure possessed by a searched document,</u> ~~indicating~~ <u>in which</u> a search processing procedure for said structured document database <u>is developed</u> from said search graph, by using index information concerning actual data in said structured document database; and

acquiring search results satisfying said search request by executing said search plan.

2. (Previously presented) A structured document search method according to claim 1, wherein, in the generation of said search plan, an optimal search plan is generated by traversing said search graph, and by using effectively said index information.

3. (Previously presented) A structured document search method according to claim 2, wherein in the method said search graph is traversed based on a strategy to evaluate preferentially the evaluatable partial graph in said search graph.

4. (Previously presented) A structured document search method according to claim 1, wherein the search plan is executed after the completion of the generation of said search plan.

5. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 1, wherein generation and execution of said search plan are performed alternately.

6. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 1, wherein said structured document database includes a hierarchical structure concerning element name and element value;

said search request includes search conditions concerning said element name and said element value; and

said index information includes at least one of data creation index including information for specifying said element value creation position in said structured document database and element name occurrence index including information for specifying said element name creation position in said structured document database.

7. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 6, wherein said element name occurrence index includes information indicating said element name creation position by a parent element one rank higher in hierarchy of the partial structure where said element name is generated.

8. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 2, wherein in the generation of said search plan, said search plan is generated by:

selecting a plan generation rule, based on a plan generation rule base where a plurality of plan generation rules including information indicating rule application conditions and information indicating the search processing contents to compose said

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search plan are registered, applying the plan generation rule to the element of said

search graph, and deciding a search processing included in the plan generation rule as

one search processing constituting said search plan; and

repeating selection and application of the plan generation rule and decision of the

following search processing in said search plan, concerning said search graph element

influenced by the results of application of said plan generation rule.

9. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 8,

wherein cost information decided by considering said index information is added to said

plan generation rule; and

the applicable plan generation rule is selected dynamically by taking account of

said cost information.

10. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 8,

wherein said plan generation rule can be arbitrarily registered or deleted in said plan

generation rule base.

11. (Original) A structured document search method according to claim 1,

wherein said search graph is generated based on the syntax analysis results of the

description of said search request, in the generation of said search graph.

12. (Currently amended) A structured document search apparatus for searching

based on a search request including a document logical structure with respect to a

structured document database having the logical structure, comprising:

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a search graph generating section configured to generate a search graph

including the document structure information based on said search request;

a search plan generating section configured to generate a search plan for a

hierarchical structure possessed by a searched document, ~~indicating the~~ in which a

search processing procedure for said structured document database is developed from

said search graph, by using index information concerning the actual data in said

structured document database; and

a search executing section configured to acquire search results satisfying said

search request by executing said search plan.

13. (Currently amended) A computer readable recording medium recording a

program for searching based on a search request including a document logical structure

with respect to a structured document database having the logical structure, wherein the

program comprises the steps of:

instruction section configured to cause a computer to generate a search graph

including the document structure information based on said search request;

instruction section configured to cause a computer to generate a search plan for

a hierarchical structure possessed by a searched document, ~~indicating the~~ in which a

search processing procedure for said structured document database is developed from

said search graph, by using index information concerning the actual data in said

structured document database; and

instruction section configured to cause a computer to acquire search results

satisfying said search request, by executing said search plan taking said structured

document database as search object.

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14. (Currently amended) A structured document search system comprising:

a logical structured document database containing an actual data;

an index information storing section configured to store index information concerning the actual data in said logical structured document database;

a search request accepting section configured to accept a search request from outside;

a search graph generating section configured to generate a search graph, based on said search request;

a search plan generating section configured to generate a search plan for a hierarchical structure possessed by a searched document, indicating a in which a search processing procedure for said structured document database is developed from said search graph, by using index information concerning the actual data in said logical structured document database; and

a search plan executing section configured to acquire search results satisfying said search request by executing said search plan.